



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 16, 2008

Contact: Chris Conlan, (858) 694-2137

SANTA MAY WANT TO STUFF STOCKINGS WITH DEET THIS YEAR ***New West Nile Virus Human Case Reported; Record Number of Local Cases This Year***

A 71-year-old Lemon Grove man is the newest West Nile virus case, bringing the number of local human cases to 35, a record in San Diego County. He was diagnosed with encephalitis and released from the hospital.

"The number of new cases is much slower now that the weather is cooler, but our region was hit hard this year, and prevention is always important," said Gary Erbeck, director of the Department of Environmental Health.

Almost 400 human cases of West Nile virus were reported throughout California in 2008: the most in Los Angeles County with 149, followed by Orange County with 68, Riverside County with 61 and San Diego County with 35.

Erbeck said many factors contributed to the high numbers, including warmer temperatures through November, the increase in green pools at foreclosed homes, and better reporting of bird and human cases due to greater public awareness.

To prevent West Nile virus:

- Remove sources of standing water outside of your home where mosquitoes can breed, including neglected pools, birdbaths, and flower pots.
- Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts when outdoors to cover your skin, and use repellent containing DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus or IR3535 on clothes and skin.
- Make sure screens on windows and doors do not have holes.
- Stock ornamental ponds and other standing water sources with mosquito fish, which are available for free from the County Department of Environmental Health.

For more information, please visit www.sdfightthebite.com.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Interviews and visuals are available today at the County Department of Environmental Health in Kearny Mesa. Please contact Chris Conlan at (858) 694-2137 to schedule.

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2008 WNV Cases:

- 35 humans (1 not locally acquired)
- 551 dead birds
- 15 sentinel chickens
- 4 horse deaths
- 1 infected horse
- 40 positive mosquito hatches

MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS

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